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# THE BIBLICAL WORLD

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## FAREWELL AND HAIL!

With this number the *Biblical World* ends its existence as a separate magazine by being merged with the *American Journal of Theology* in a new periodical to be called the *Journal of Religion*. The change is significant of a realignment in religious interest. Thirty-eight years ago William Rainey Harper founded the *Hebrew Student* as one expression of new enthusiasm for the study of Hebrew. Following and aiding the trend of biblical study, this journal became successively the *Old Testament Student*, the *Old and New Testament Student*, and, with its appearance as one of the publications of the University of Chicago, the *Biblical World*. The succession in titles mirrors the growth in interests—a growth still further reflected during the past ten years in the change in the material published in our pages from biblical to that possessing general religious emphasis. Thus for nearly forty years, the *Biblical World* has been a popular champion of progress, scholarship, and faith.

Twenty-five years ago the *American Journal of Theology* was founded as a scientific publication. Throughout these years it has never sought popularity, but the stream of better-understood religious interests has gradually swept it into the treatment of vital as well as academic subjects.

Thus because of their very loyalty to the needs of the religious world, the two magazines gradually converged in purpose. Religion rather than exclusively biblical and theological study became the field of both. To consolidate them was a logical outcome of the history of their times and themselves. A larger service can be done by a distinctive publication than by two allied magazines.

More than a generation has passed since the *Biblical World* began its service. With it have also passed a point a view and

method among independent students of religion. Barring a few significant exceptions theological seminaries throughout the Protestant world are committed to the historico-critical study of the Bible and to a conception of the church and its message adapted to our modern world. Dogmatic authority has to no small degree yielded to the authority of scientific method. The church is stronger and more aggressive than ever before.

Yet this very development has brought about reaction. Over against intelligence in religion is being organized anti-intelligence. The issue is dividing the church and imperiling its future. Intelligent religion is losing popular influence; obscurant and reactionary religion is losing educated men and women. Protestantism has no way of creating a religious proletariat controlled by educated bodies, but it can easily become a proletariat controlled by theological demagogues. And this danger is distinctly threatening. The one hope of the Protestant churches today as in other days lies in keeping abreast of intellectual and social forces. Temporary popularity of preachers, and enthusiasm for irrational hopes do not argue lasting significance. Permanence belongs only to what is rational. To doubt this is to flout history and deny God.

But will intelligent Christians support the church as an institution? Or will they in disgust abandon it to its fate at the hands of untrained and untrustworthy leaders? That is a real question just now, and one for which we could wish an affirmative answer were more immediate. Between the theological demagogue and the academic dogmatist there is nothing to choose. Religion can no more thrive upon technical scholarship alone than health can be derived directly from treatises on physiology. In religion as in medicine personality must transmute truth into life. Information is not activity.

Religion must be made intelligent, but it must be more than academic. It must be vital. The new *Journal of Religion* is consecrated to these convictions. It will be scientific but it will not forget that religion is a thing of life more than of documents—a discernible and educatable outgoing of the soul. And thus it becomes the fulfilment rather than merely the successor of the *Biblical World*.